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San Francisco Airport Commission

Runway Reconfiguration Program Update

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2000

San Francisco International Airport

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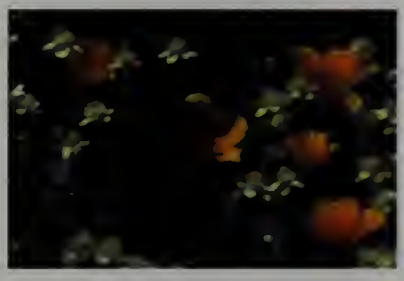

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SFO is committed to using the most advanced technology available and approved by the FAA to reduce flight delays and enhance safety. Staff currently is working with experts from NASA Ames Research and the Federal Aviation Administration to fully analyze and implement, where appropriate, new technology. A full study of systems and demand management methods is being conducted.

Extensive environmental studies under way:

Lead agencies for the joint Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) are the Federal Aviation Administration and the Office of Environmental Review for the City and County of San Francisco. The two agencies are conducting independent environmental studies and, in accordance with federal and state laws, preparing the EIS/EIR. A draft EIS/EIR report is scheduled for release for public comment in the Fall of 2001.

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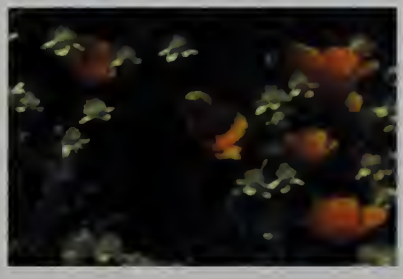
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2000

Welcome to our monthly update on the activities and status of the San Francisco International Airport's Runway Reconfiguration Program.

Spotlight on the environment:

The Federal Aviation Administration and the San Francisco Office of Environmental Review are proceeding with environmental studies of SFO's proposed reconfiguration of its 50-year-old runways. SFO is one of the most delayed airports in the United States, primarily because of its antiquated runway system that does not allow for simultaneous aircraft arrival during bad weather.



Our objectives in the runway program are:

- ✈ Reduce flight delays
- ✈ Reduce human exposure to aircraft noise
- ✈ Accommodate the New Large Aircraft
- ✈ Achieve net environmental gains for the Bay

The EIR/EIS is studying alternatives to achieve the objectives of the program. One "no-build" option would include not building new facilities. Another option would utilize system and demand management. Four other alternatives would involve separating and expanding the current runways.

Each alternative is being given detailed consideration, and is being weighed against the "no-build" option. All of the alternatives would incorporate technological improvements anticipated to occur in the next 10 to 15 years.

Some of the world's most experienced professionals have been engaged to assist in thoroughly evaluating the alternatives. These professionals are providing the data and analysis that will contribute to the scientific foundation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

SFO is committed to using the most advanced technology available and approved by the FAA to reduce flight delays and enhance safety. Staff currently is working with experts from NASA Ames Research and the Federal Aviation Administration to fully analyze and implement, where appropriate, new technology. A full study of systems and demand management methods is being conducted.

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Environmental studies for the Runway Reconfiguration Program will provide a legacy of data that will benefit San Francisco Bay science for decades to come.

EIS/EIR topics for each alternative

- Noise
- Land Use
- Air Quality
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Historical and Cultural Resources
- Biological Resources
- Recreation
- Farmland/Agricultural Resources
- Energy Supply and Natural Resources
- Design, Architecture, and Visual Resources/Aesthetics
- Solid Waste
- Hazardous Materials
- Surface Transportation
- Geology/Seismicity
- Social Impacts
- Induced Socio-Economic Impacts and Environmental Justice
- Parks, Recreational Areas, and Properties Included on or Eligible for the National Register of Historic Properties
- Land and Water Conservation Funds Properties
- Consistency of Project Alternatives with the Coastal Zone Management Program

The scope of the environmental studies includes:

- **The most comprehensive hydrology and sedimentation study ever conducted on the Bay.** Scientists from URS Corp., Stanford University, The Danish Hydraulics Institute and the Woodshole Group will examine the impact each runway alternative would have on the Bay's circulation and water quality.
- **A computerized cataloging of Bay specimens.** SFO and The California Academy of Sciences have joined forces to create a computerized database of 27,000 invertebrate and 1,800 fishes specimens collected from the San Francisco Bay. The database will increase access to present and historic Bay habitat information. Currently, this information is retained in handwritten files, limiting its usefulness for multiple, detailed and specific inquiry.
- **A thorough assessment of potential impacts on biological resources.** This analysis will focus on biotic communities, on threatened or endangered species, and on the wetlands. Baseline bird surveys, analysis of fisheries and other marine/aquatic species and studies of benthic populations are being conducted.

Mitigation:

In the event that a runway reconfiguration is selected, the airport is committed to extensive environmental mitigation. A consortium of federal, state and local resource agencies recently published the Bayland Habitat Goals Report, in which more than 65,000 acres around the Bay were identified as possible habitat restoration sites. More than 80 percent of the Bay's wetlands have been lost over the last 150 years, and the airport recognizes that an historic opportunity exists to contribute to the restoration of the lost tidal marshes.

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FEBRUARY/MARCH 2001

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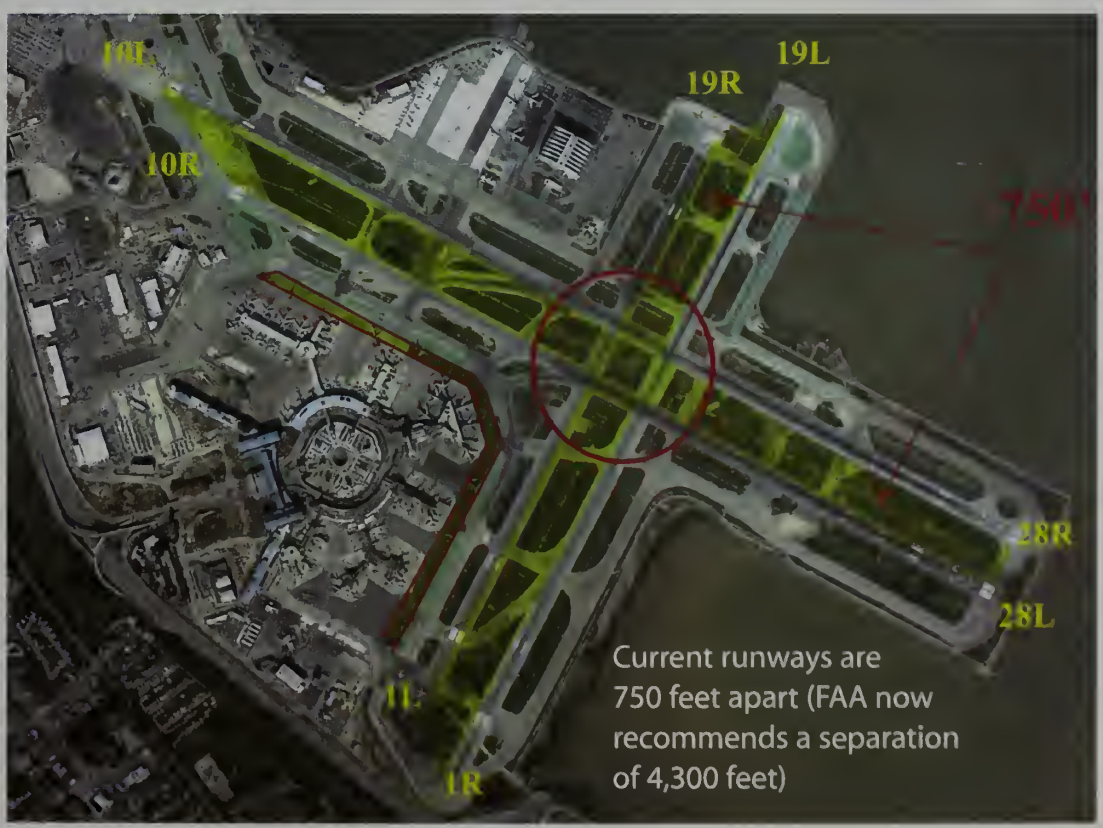
San Francisco International Airport's runways were constructed more than 50 years ago at a time when aircraft were smaller, air travel was beginning to increase and the Bay Area had not yet become an international powerhouse in trade and tourism.

Today, SFO has among the worst flight delay records of any major U.S. airport. One day out of every six, SFO's average flight delay is 40 minutes or greater. Why? Our parallel runways are 750 apart, which means one must be shut down for safety reasons during foggy or bad weather. The Federal Aviation Administration currently recommends that runways be separated by 4,300 feet. Shutting one of SFO's runways, which occurs one day out of every two, reduces arrival capacity from 60 flights per hour to 30 flights per hour.

Where are we now?

SFO is studying six alternatives to address delays. One alternative is a "do nothing" option; one alternative is a "no build" option, and four alternatives involve "build" options that would require runway reconfiguration. Each alternative is being given detailed consideration under the joint Environmental Impact Report and the Environmental Impact Statement studies. More than 30 regulatory agencies must approve any alternatives selected. The Bay Plan, adopted by the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, has established that airports are a priority Bay Use.

CURRENT RUNWAY LAYOUT



SFO Facts:

Current runways were built in 1940s

Passengers in 1949: 1.3 million

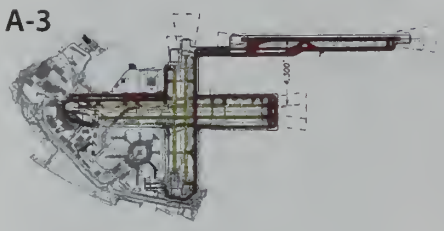
Passengers in 1999: 41.8 million

Intersecting runways prohibit simultaneous take off and landing

SFO Runway "Build" Options

Current runways shown in yellow

A-3



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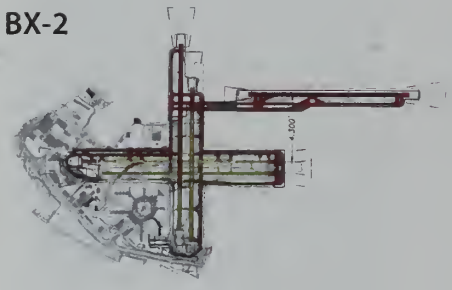

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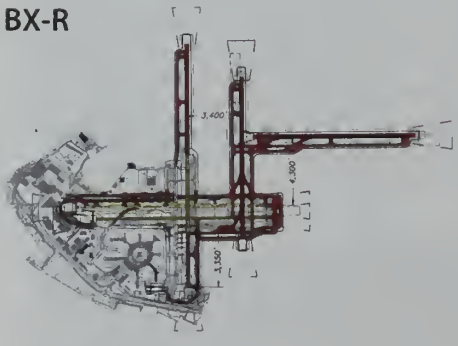

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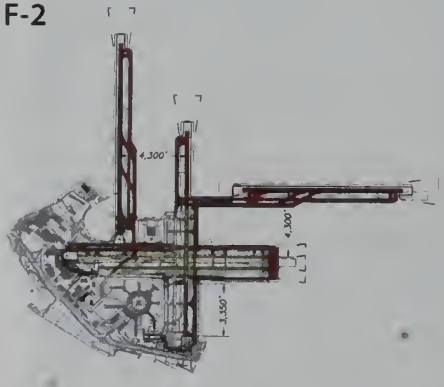

What is the "no build" option?

SFO is committing significant financial resources to an exhaustive, independent evaluation of a "no build" solution to reduce flight delays, reduce human exposure to aircraft noise, accommodate New Large Aircraft and achieve net environmental gains for the Bay. This option is known as "Alternative 2."

Unlike options that would require Bay fill to build new or expanded runways, Alternative 2 would utilize demand management techniques and technological improvements to reduce flight delays.

Demand management practices include slot controls (which limit flights during all weather conditions to increase schedule reliability), pricing strategies, expanding existing regional airports, the introduction of high-speed ferries and trains and other techniques that would reduce flight delays - the cornerstone objective of the Runway Reconfiguration Program. Additionally, a number of new surface, en route, approach and terminal technologies are being aggressively pursued by the airport for all of the options.

SFO welcomes independent analysis of the runway program

SFO runway program officials meet regularly with regional policy makers, environmental groups, airline officials, pilots, business leaders, and other interested parties. The airport has aggressively pursued independent analysis of the program, including significant input from the following:

- **Blue Ribbon Engineering Panel** – A panel of marine structures engineers (with more than 250 years of collective experience) was asked to review construction methodologies in the event that SFO's runways are reconfigured.
- **Scientific Peer Review Panel** – More than a dozen pre-eminent scientists were asked to review the scope of the marine-related environmental studies, with emphasis on each of his or her individual disciplines.
- **NOAA Panel** – A panel of scientific experts, including members of the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, has analyzed, and will continue to analyze, technical studies of marine-related environmental issues.
- **Technology Panel** – SFO and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission are in the process of assembling an independent panel to evaluate and assess technological advances.
- **Stakeholders Meetings** – SFO meets regularly with business leaders, community residents, labor representatives, environmentalists, elected officials and airline industry representatives.
- **Environmental Liaison Officer** – An independent representative serves as a liaison between SFO and the environmental community. The ELO was selected by several environmental groups, including the Alliance for a Clean Waterfront, the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge, Baykeeper and Save the Bay.
- **Airline Liaison Officer** – An independent representative serves as a liaison between SFO and the airline industry.
- **Charles River Associates** – Charles River Associates, an international consulting firm specializing in transportation, will provide an independent and critical analysis of possible alternatives to reconfiguring runways at SFO (the no-build option known as Alternative 2).
- **Multi-agency Task Force** – State, federal and local regulatory agencies involved in analyzing any Bay-related impacts of the runway reconfiguration program and providing permits for the program, meet monthly with SFO, the Federal Aviation Administration and the city's Office of Environmental Review to discuss the status of the environmental studies.

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